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JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL



By

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Lieutenant Colonel, UK Army

Better Together: Rethinking U.S. and UK Defense Cooperation.

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.

This paper is entirely my own work except as documented in footnotes.

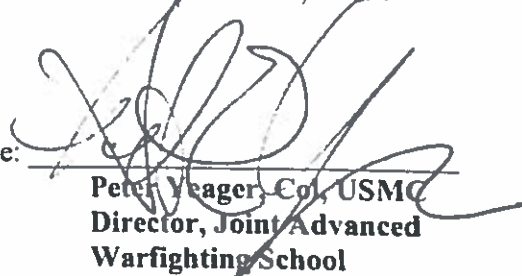
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ABSTRACT

Due to the move towards a multi-polar world, the rising cost of defense equipment, and budget constraints, it is difficult for the U.S. and UK to protect their national interests. The U.S. can no longer be expected to single handedly protect world order, nor can it afford to. At the same time, cuts to UK military capability have left the UK unable to conduct anything more than the smallest unilateral operations.

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During my time in the British Army I have served on numerous operational tours under U.S. command. More recently, in 2014 and 2015 I was involved in the UK Airborne Brigade's interoperability work with the 82nd Airborne Division. In both instances I was struck by the compatibility of the two militaries, the shared challenges facing both nations, and the inefficiencies created through a lack of interoperability. Therefore, this thesis is born out of a wish to explore whether U.S. and UK interests are so closely aligned that the two countries could, in theory, conduct far deeper military cooperation and in doing so make better use of scarce resources.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the world has been uni-polar. The status quo has suited the West and given structure to world affairs. However, a combination of increasing power being held by other states, the rise of non-state actors, the growth of NGOs, and the proliferation of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), are signaling a move to a multi-polar world in which the U.S. and UK will find it increasingly difficult to protect their national interests without support from others.¹ Unless Western states find innovative ways of combining their power, international order could change quickly and unpredictably. If there is a rapid change to world order, academics such as Abramson Organski and Robert Keohane predict an upsurge in conflict, and Richard Haass predicts “mostly negative consequences for the United States.”²

Concurrent to the rise of other spheres of power, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Roger Altman, and Richard Haass highlight the recent, relative reduction in defense spending in the U.S.³ Simultaneously, the UK’s economic troubles have also forced cuts to military capability.⁴ Furthermore, the need to invest in new frontiers such as cyber and space, overlaid with increasing costs of defense equipment, are exacerbating the trend of reduced military spending in the U.S. and UK.⁵ As noted in Janes in 2010, “high and

¹ Paul Starobin, “Beyond Hegemony-what would Happen if America were no Longer no. 1 in the World, if the American Goliath no Longer Acted as the World's Government?” *National Journal* 38, no. 48 (2006): 18; W. Max Corden, “American Decline and the End of Hegemony,” *SAIS Review* 10, no. 2 (1990): 13.

² A.F.K. Organski, *World Politics* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1968), 376. Organski argues that a change in power dynamics leads to an increase chance of conflict; Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Richard N. Haass, “The Age of Nonpolarity,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2008): 56.

³ Roger C. Altman. and Richard Haass. “American Profligacy and American Power: The Consequences of Fiscal responsibility,” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 89, No. 6 (Nov/Dec 2010): 25-34. Altman and Haas both served at senior levels in the U.S. administration.

⁴ HM Government. *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review* (London: The Stationary Office, 2010).

⁵ Nicholas Kitchen, *The Future of UK Foreign Policy* (London: LSE Research Online, 2010).

rising costs of modern defence equipment together with falling defence budgets mean that no nation can avoid difficult defence choices.”⁶ As Simon Serfaty notes there is a discernable risk of the West losing its assurance and cohesion as the power of Western states dissipates.⁷

However, there is some good news. The U.S.-UK ‘special relationship’ is largely intact, and there are areas, such as communications intelligence and special forces, where the U.S. and UK are working closely together.⁸ Moreover, there are examples of unprecedented burden sharing between states, especially amongst NATO and European countries, which combined with the recent propensity for Western nations to form coalitions, demonstrates the will and ability of Western states to form enduring, symbiotic military relationships.⁹

Therefore, whilst neither the U.S. nor UK will outsource the security of their homeland, the strategic environment is such that the U.S. and UK must examine the benefits of increased security integration. This may be the time for the U.S. and UK to capitalize on their special relationship in order to gain more mutual security and to act as a bedrock around which the West can anchor itself.

To that end, this thesis will propose that: In a time of static or decreasing defense budgets and increased global threats, the U.S. and UK should capitalize on their special relationship through further integration of military capability. Doing so successfully might provide greater efficiency and flexibility in securing national interests.

⁶ Keith Hartley, "The Economics of the Defence Review," *The RUSI Journal* 155, no. 6 (2010): 4.

⁷ Simon Serfaty, "The Folly of Forgetting the West," *Policy Review*, (August and September 2012): 35-48.

⁸ As shown on exercises such as a U.S.-UK combined exercise in North Carolina in which the U.S. and UK Airborne forces conducted a Joint Theatre Entry exercise in March 2014; Derek Mix, *The United Kingdom and U.S.-UK Relations* (Congressional Research Service, 2013).

⁹ Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-first Century*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003).

Increased defense integration comes with risk and only occurs when there is a clear requirement to change. Therefore, Chapter 2 explores the UK's strategic context. The UK's decline in military power since WWII is stark. Despite the positive headlines of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), the chances of the UK rebuilding a sustainable, unilateral power projection capability are small. Moreover, due to U.S. dominance of space and nuclear technology, the UK would find it difficult to project and sustain a conventional military force, or use its nuclear strategic deterrence, without U.S. support.

Whilst the U.S. has not suffered from a decline in absolute power, Chapter 3 explains why the U.S. should put resources into encouraging bandwagoning from other Western states. The U.S. is in debt, its military is shrinking, defense equipment is getting more expensive, and inconclusive campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan have eroded confidence in the ability of the U.S. to achieve its desired foreign policy outcomes. In contrast, China's military continues to grow, multi-national corporations accrue power, WMD proliferates, and terrorism persists. Meeting those challenges requires fresh thinking and increased collaboration between states.

The U.S. and UK's relationship is known colloquially as the 'special relationship'. Through the use of theory and practical examples, Chapter 4 analyzes the strength of the special relationship based on comparisons of strategic guidance, history, shared threats, geography, International Organizations (IOs), and the economy. When analyzed in such a systematic fashion, the strength of the special relationship is beyond doubt; the number and depth of the links between the two countries proves that the U.S. and UK would support each other should either of their vital national interests be threatened.

Chapter 5 examines contemporary arguments for deepening military alliances between states. Robert Cooper explains how some states, particularly in Europe, have benefited from outsourcing aspects of their national security to other nations.¹⁰ Senior diplomats from NATO countries have stated the need for more inter-state cooperation in providing collective security. Condoleezza Rice believes that “Lord Palmerston got it wrong when he said that nations have no permanent allies. The United States does have permanent allies: the nations with whom we share common values.”¹¹ Rice may be overstating the case but her underlying point is sound. General Odierno, a former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, in an interview with a British newspaper, reiterated the point: “This is the most uncertain global environment that I have seen in 40 years of service...we need our multinational partners...we need to have multinational solutions.”¹² There are compelling theoretical and practical arguments as to why the U.S. and UK should consider closer defense cooperation.

One example of the practical application of progressive thinking on military integration and collective defense is NATO’s concept of Smart Defense. Delivery of Smart Defense across an alliance the size of NATO is difficult because of the range of interests, resources, and cultures of NATO countries. However, the principles of Smart Defense could be more easily applied to the U.S. and UK. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess all of the different options for increased U.S. – UK defense integration, Chapter 6 highlights some areas in which collective gains are apparent. To

¹⁰ Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations*, 26.

¹¹ Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking the national interest,” *Foreign Affairs*, (July/August 2008), <https://nduezproxy.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=32554472&site=ehost-live&scope=site> (accessed November 2, 2015).

¹² Con Coughlin, “US fears that Britain’s defence cuts will diminish army on world stage,” *Telegraph*, March 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11443204/Britain-is-becoming-a-friend-who-cant-be-trusted-says-top-US-general.html> (accessed on November 28, 2015).

achieve those gains the UK would need to make changes to its military, but the potential benefits of aligning with the most powerful military in the world would make any restructuring changes worthwhile. Conversely, the U.S. would not need to make structural changes in order to recognize the benefits of increased defense integration with the UK; the U.S. would only need to give time and energy to the process of folding UK capability more closely into U.S. capability.

This thesis proves that there are compelling theoretical and practical arguments for deeper defense cooperation. However, any move that can be construed as giving up sovereignty is likely to come under close scrutiny on both sides of the Atlantic. Therefore, in Chapter 7 this thesis analyzes the arguments against increased cooperation. A closer examination of the arguments shows that a successful process of specialization would not require the U.S. to take risk on any of its military capabilities. The UK would be taking perceived risks against its unilateral capabilities but, in fact, the UK already holds those risks – they are just not widely acknowledged. Nonetheless, even though the logic for the UK to deepen defense cooperation is sound, it would come with political risk. After Prime Minister Tony Blair's support to the invasion of Iraq, British politicians have become wary of overtly linking the UK's defense policy to the U.S. Moreover, the British public would instinctively be skeptical of such a move because British strategic culture is such that many in the population hold outdated and inflated views of the UK's military capability. Hence, political nervousness and British pride will likely act as the biggest impediments to creating greater mutual security.

This paper does not suggest that the U.S. decline will happen immediately or that threats to global order are going to manifest themselves in the short term. However, due to the time it takes for militaries to restructure, further U.S. and UK military integration

must be discussed now, in order to ensure both countries are prepared to face the complex, global challenges of the 21st Century.

Chapter 2: British Military Challenges

Nigel Ashton argues that the Suez Crisis of 1956 proved that UK had lost the “capacity for independent action.”¹ At the time, the UK military contained three-quarters of a million troops; it is now less than a quarter of that size. In Iraq the UK struggled to provide enough forces to control one city; in Afghanistan the UK was only able to control Central Helmand by placing the Army on a campaign footing. The limited war in Libya in 2011 stretched UK military resources, even with support from the U.S. Britain could no longer fight the Falklands War in the way it did in 1982, nor could it field the ground forces that deployed to the first Gulf War in 1991. As Mark Stoler notes, the UK’s decline started prior to WWII due to “the global spread of industrialization, the subsequent rise of new economic power centers, and an aging population” but it has only been more recently that the UK’s military has been reduced to the extent that unilateral operations would be difficult, if not impossible, to sustain.²

Global Power Projection

One of the criteria for being a great power is global power projection. Despite bold rhetoric, the UK is currently unable to project power in a meaningful way. The 2010 SDSR gave the Ministry of Defence (MOD) the task of delivering a brigade via amphibious means, but under current resource constraints, it is unable to do so.³ Whilst the UK has purchased two of the Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers, they will not be in full service until 2023 and the Royal Navy does not have enough ships to

¹ Nigel J. Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American Relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955-1959* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 99.

² Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 128.

³ HM Government. *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty*, 21.

deliver the troops that make up an amphibious brigade.⁴ Geoffrey Till, a professor in Maritime Studies at King's College London, refers to "the drastic decline in the number of warships available to the Royal Navy, compared to the inexorably rising number of commitments."⁵

The UK military is also unable to project ground forces via the full suite of air assault operations. The minimum force required to seize an airfield in a contested area is a combined arms Battlegroup, but the UK current policy for airborne operations only supports the maintenance of parachuting capability for one company.⁶ The ability to conduct air dispatch has also atrophied, leaving the UK's airborne forces without the ability to deliver vehicles, guns, and supplies by parachute.

Not only is the UK unable to conduct opposed theatre entry by airborne or amphibious operations, it also lacks the means to mount an armored division. The British Army considers a division as the lowest level of command at which the full orchestra of land warfare can be played, and yet 3 (UK) Division, the UK's only armored division at readiness, contains only one brigade at high readiness. Therefore, it is a war fighting division in name only. The 2015 SDSR states that by 2025 the Army will have two Armored Brigades and two Medium Weight Strike Brigades. The details of the new structure have not yet been published but assuming a 'year on, year off' readiness cycle, there will only be one Armored Brigade and one Medium Weight Brigade at readiness at

⁴ Technically it could be achieved if every ship in the Royal Navy was made available but that is not a realistic solution. The British Landing Platform Helicopter, HMS Ocean, is due to be retired once the second QEC carrier comes into service and one Landing Platform Dock will be placed on extended readiness. Furthermore, due to maintenance it is inconceivable that every ship in the fleet could be available at one time.

⁵ Geoffrey Till, "Great Britain Gambles with the Royal Navy," *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 1 (Winter 2010), 33.

⁶ Based on the size of a standard airfield, a Combined Arms Battlegroup based around a Parachute Battalion (of circa 800 -1000 pax) would be the minimum size formation to seize and secure it.

any one time. Therefore, whilst the 2015 SDSR was welcomed by the British Army, it has not restored the British Army's ability to put an armored division in to the field.

Defense Spending

The decline in UK military capability has been due to a number of reasons, such as the drain of Afghanistan, the folding of nuclear costs into the defense budget, and the increasing cost of military technology. In 2014 the Economist summed up the issue:

In 2010 a new Conservative-led coalition government took an axe to defense, as it did to much other state spending. The Ministry of Defence's budget was trimmed by 8%. On top of that, the department had to close a £45.6 billion (\$76.2 billion) hole in the equipment budget, which had been mismanaged by the previous government. Then the Treasury shifted the costs of running and upgrading Britain's nuclear arsenal to the ministry. All told, the defense budget had to be cut by about a quarter—while Britain was still maintaining a large force in Afghanistan.⁷

As Nicholas Kitchen recognizes in his commentary on the 2010 SDSR, cuts in defense spending are not easily reversible as they are underpinned by national budget deficits that threaten the UK's long term economic stability:

British military, diplomatic and aid resources have been stretched over the past fifteen years by Britain's global activism. The UK has committed significant military force to the Balkans twice, to Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq, and has committed to play a global leadership role on issues such as climate change, debt relief and development. The global economic crisis, catalysed by the banking sector on which so much of the UK's strong economic performance since the mid-1990s relied, has hit Britain worse than most, leaving a budget deficit estimated to be as high as 12% of GDP. The United Kingdom has been living beyond its means, and the sections of the budget tasked with pursuing British foreign policy will have to accept their share of the inevitable cuts.⁸

The 2015 SDSR did not contain the steep cuts that the military were expecting but as Malcolm Chambers, the Deputy Director-General of RUSI states, the new SDSR “does

⁷ Missing in Action. *Economist*, (March 2014), <http://www.economist.com/news/britain/21598654-britain-needs-strategy-make-best-use-its-shrinking-military-capabilities-it-isnt> (accessed on October 1, 2015).

⁸ Kitchen, *The Future of UK Foreign Policy*, 5.

not add up to a step change in UK defence capabilities compared with current levels. It is therefore best described as being a ‘steady as she goes’ review, providing a welcome element of stability in defence planning after five years of substantial reductions.”⁹ The stabilization of spending explained in the 2015 SDSR means that the military will maintain its current levels in manpower and equipment. The challenges facing the UK military persist.

An Imbalance of Ends, Ways, and Means

The weaknesses in the UK military are out of step with the country’s ambitions. In the 2010 National Security Strategy, the Prime Minister unequivocally rejected any “notion of shrinkage of our influence.”¹⁰ The 2010 SDSR went on to say: “Our future forces, although smaller than now, will retain their geographical reach and their ability to operate across a full spectrum from high-intensity intervention to enduring stabilization activity.”¹¹ Furthermore, it claims that the UK “will continue to be. . . able to deploy a self-sustaining and properly equipped. . . force anywhere around the world and to sustain it indefinitely.”¹² The language in the 2015 SDSR is slightly less ambitious, possibly in recognition of the UK’s inability to meet the lofty goals set out in 2010. However, it still is unequivocal that the UK must be able to respond to the full range of threats as well as promoting British values abroad.¹³

Whilst some in the UK are fooling themselves as to the country’s military might,

⁹ Malcolm Chambers, “Steady as She Goes: The Outcome of the 2015 SDSR,” *RUSI* (23 November 2015), <https://rusi.org/commentary/steady-she-goes-outcome-2015-sdsr> (accessed on December 28, 2015).

¹⁰ HM Government. *Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty*, 10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³ HM Government. *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom* (London: HM Government, 2015), 5-6.

fooling the UK's closest allies (and presumably enemies) may be more difficult. In 2013 the Financial Times reported that U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter could barely hide his dismay, when he described the UK's reductions in military spending as "actions which seem to indicate disengagement."¹⁴ Similarly, Anne Applebaum recently wrote an editorial for the Washington Post explaining U.S. concern over the UK's ability to execute its foreign policy.¹⁵ When interviewed in March 2015 General Odierno highlighted the inability of the UK to field an Armored Division with three Armored Brigades, "what has changed is the level of capability, in the past we would have had a British Division working alongside a U.S. Division".¹⁶ British rhetoric in national documents does not match reality and senior leaders in the U.S. have realized. The UK's ways and means do not match the ends.

As Sun Tzu pointed out, the danger of not knowing your own capabilities is as dangerous as not knowing the enemy.¹⁷ In the case of the UK, the ignoring of current military limitations ensures that decisions are based on what the UK would *like* to do, not what is possible. The procurement of the two QEC carriers is an example of the drive for unilateral action outstripping the ability to deliver it. Britain procured two QEC carriers without budgeting fully for the aircraft to fly from them, the assets to protect them, the amphibious forces to exploit their projection, and the helicopter landing platforms required to complement them. Therefore, the drive to secure unilateral global projection

¹⁴ Kiren Stacey and George Parker, "Expert warns UK defence spending plans may not meet NATO target," *Financial Times* (London), (June 1 2015) <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/046031b4-0862-11e5-85de-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3svmY511A> (accessed on October 25, 2015).

¹⁵ Anne Applebaum, "The End of Britain as we know it," *The Washington Post*, article posted on May 10, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-end-of-britain-as-we-know-it/2015/05/10/1c82b4ea-f716-11e4-a13c-193b1241d51a_story.html (accessed 1 November 2015).

¹⁶ Coughlin, "US fears that Britain's defence cuts will diminish Army on world stage."

¹⁷ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. and ed. Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 84.

has led to the UK having an unbalanced Navy. The UK has admitted some of those shortcomings by reducing the number of aircraft allocated to each carrier and by deciding to have one carrier in dry dock at any time. However, even with those adjustments, no immediate solutions are available for sustaining and maximizing the potential of the QEC carriers.¹⁸

Current Reliance on the U.S.

The most compelling argument for the UK to give up some of its military sovereignty is that it already has. The UK military is reliant on satellites for global positioning systems, communications, and Unmanned Aerial Systems, without which the UK military would be almost ineffective. The UK has its own satellites but does not have the means to defend them. Nor is there a unilateral UK plan to defend space. Therefore, the UK is dependent on the goodwill of the U.S. for the free use, and protection, of space.

In 2015, Lieutenant General Raymond, Commander of U.S. Air Force Space Command's 14th Air Force, spoke publically about the threat to Western satellites, "China recently launched a successful nondestructive direct ascent antisatellite missile, placing satellites in low Earth orbit at risk...Russia in May quietly launched an experimental satellite that we're keeping a close eye on ... in the not too distant future every satellite in every orbit will be able to be put at risk."¹⁹ The threat is real and the U.S. is investing circa \$8 billion per annum in military space programs. The UK is not

¹⁸ Kitchen, *The Future of UK Foreign Policy*, 13.

¹⁹ Warren Ferster, General: Russian, Chinese Launches Demonstrate Growing Space Threat, *Space News* (April 2015). <http://spacenews.com/u-s-general-says-russian-chinese-launches-demonstrate-growing-space-threat/> (accessed January 27, 2016).

investing in the protection of space and nor could it afford to. Therefore, by default the UK is relying on U.S. programs to defend critical parts of its military infrastructure.

Just as significantly, the UK has already outsourced its ultimate defense. As former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook stated, “the deterrent is no longer independent as the missiles were leased from the Pentagon – what Denis Healey [UK Secretary of State for Defence 1964- 1970] once referred to as ‘rent-a-rocket’!”²⁰ David Allen, in his study of the UK nuclear deterrent, states that “although it is generally accepted that Britain has retained its independent capacity to fire its nuclear weapons without consulting the United States, there are those who contest this and who say that the United Kingdom remains dependent on the United States to communicate with its submarines, to fix their positions accurately and to target their warheads.”²¹ Allen’s findings have been confirmed by the recent cross-party independent Trident Commission that stated, “the UK is dependent on the United States for many component parts of the guidance and re-entry vehicle, and for the Trident ballistic missile system itself.”²² Professor Colin Gray stated in evidence to a British Defence Committee in 2006: “For anyone who wishes to question the true independence of the British nuclear deterrent I would concede that it is hostage to American goodwill...the dependency is critical and will continue.”²³

Due to the U.S.’s leading position in space and its role in providing nuclear capability to the UK, the UK needs to be honest with itself as to how reliant it is on the

²⁰ David Allen, *The UK Nuclear Deterrence: time for a rethink?* (Loughborough: Loughborough University, 2011), 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²² British American Security Information Council, *The Trident Commission; an Independent, Cross Party Inquiry to Examine UK Nuclear Weapons Policy* (London: BASIC, 2014), 16.

²³ *Ibid.*, 17.

U.S. to fight wars and to protect its national interests. Assuming that the UK is not going to assume full responsibility for its protection of space or for developing an independent nuclear capability (which is not being discussed and would be almost impossible due to cost) then it is clear that the UK relies on the U.S. to protect itself or project force. The UK must acknowledge those vulnerabilities and consider how to better invest in its relationship with the U.S.

The mismatch in the UK's ends, ways and means would be challenging even in a stable world but it is more so against the context laid out by General Houghton, the UK Chief of the Defense Staff, in his annual speech to RUSI: "I start from the firm belief that the world is becoming a more dangerous, less certain, less predictable, more unstable place."²⁴ Fresh thinking is required.

²⁴ General Houghton, "Annual Chief of the Defence Staff's Annual RUSI Lecture 2014," *RUSI*, (December 2014). <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/annual-chief-of-the-defence-staffs-royal-united-services-institute-lecture-2014> (accessed September 23, 2015).

Chapter 3: Threats to U.S. Power

The challenges to the UK are not unique. A number of authors such as Robert Cooper and Zbigniew Brzezinski have commented on the relative reduction in U.S. power. The rate of change is often exaggerated, as demonstrated by academics such as Max Cordon, who predicted the decline of the U.S. as early as 1990.¹ Nonetheless, national debt, the rise of China, recent U.S. failures in using force, the proliferation of WMD, and the increased ability of non-state actors to conduct organized violence, all threaten to dilute U.S. power. Joseph Nye's interpretation of the relative reduction in U.S. power appears to be particularly well balanced. He postulates that the U.S. is likely to lose power due to rising competition on at least one plane of his three dimensional chessboard, consisting of military, economic, and cross-border transactions.² This thesis does not aim to prove that the U.S. is in decline, only that there are enough threats to U.S. power, that it should be investing in strategies that encourage bandwagoning of like minded states.

Economic Challenges

Altman and Haas, both of whom have served at senior levels in the U.S. Administration, highlight the extent of the U.S.'s financial fragility.³ They predict extremely serious negative consequences for the U.S. if it cannot curb the current account deficit and government debt.

¹ Max W Corden. "American Decline and the End of Hegemony," *SAIS Review* 10, no. 2 (Summer – Fall, 1990): 13- 26. Cordon considers Japan to be the country that will most likely change the status quo and he overstates the speed of change.

² Joseph S. Nye Jr., "The Future of American Power," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2010) <https://www.foreignaffairs.org/articles/2010-11-01/future-american-power> (accessed on October 15, 2015).

³ Roger Altman and Richard Haass, "American Profligacy and American Power," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (2010): 25.

Historian Niall Ferguson “reflects on the rise, reign, and possible fall of the U.S.”⁴ In doing so he picks a number of threats to U.S. power but highlights his primary concern as the “financial deficit- not enough savings relative to investment and not enough taxation relative to public expenditure.”⁵ In its most recent report, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) stated that the U.S. national debt “is now equivalent to about 74 percent of the economy’s annual output, or Gross Domestic Product (GDP)- a higher percentage than at any point in U.S. history except a seven-year period around World War II.”⁶ The CBO goes on to predict that in the long term the debt will grow due to an aging population and increasing health care costs as shown in Figure 1.

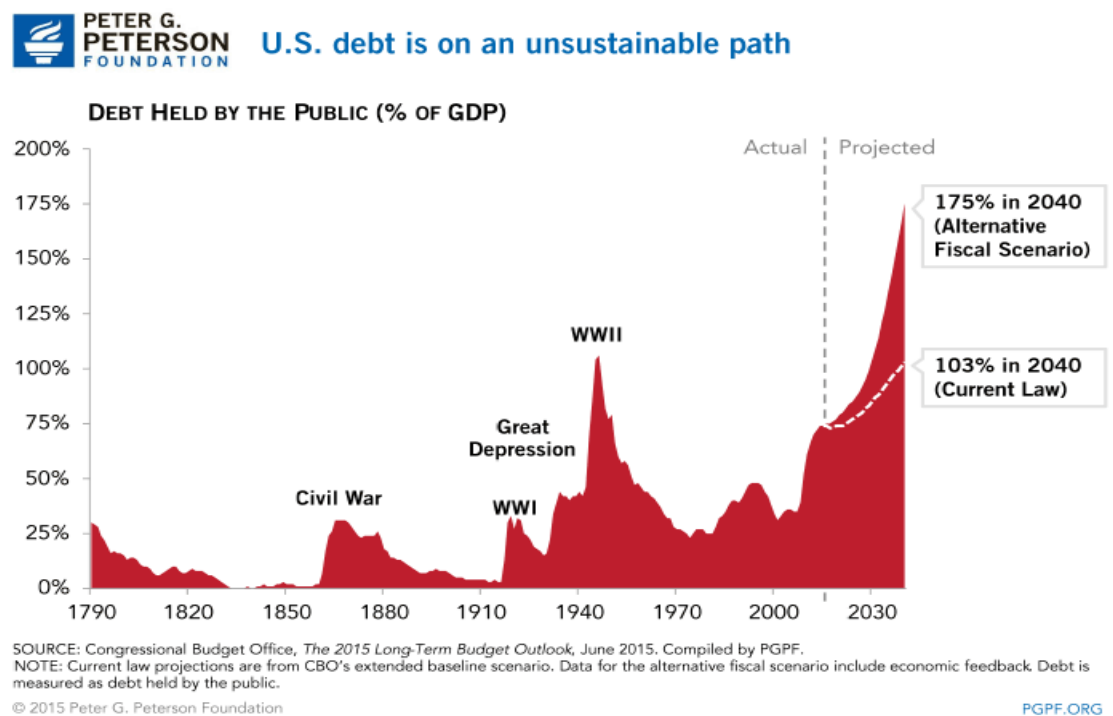


Figure 1. 2015 Long Term Budget Outlook⁷

⁴ Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 2.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “U.S. Debt is on a Unsustainable Path,” *Peter G Peterson Foundation*, (November 8, 2015), http://www.pgpf.org/chart-archive/0010_federal-debt-proj (accessed November 29, 2015).

⁷ Ibid.

It is notoriously difficult to predict future markets but even if Altman, Hass, Ferguson, and the CBO have painted an overly pessimistic view, they make a compelling case as to why government spending is a strategic risk.⁸ “Increasing debt need not lead to the U.S. decline, but it certainly raises the long-term risk.”⁹ As the U.S. aims to address that risk, restricted defense spending will be a feature for the foreseeable future.

The Rise of the Rest

“The IMF predicts that by the end of this decade the Chinese economy will be worth \$26.98tn - 20% bigger than the US at \$22.3tn...long term financial forecasts from the IMF and others indicate that by 2100 India could overtake them both.”¹⁰ In 2009 China became the world’s biggest exporter. At the end of 2012, China reported that its total trade in goods had outstripped that of the US.¹¹ This means that China is increasingly becoming the world’s most important bilateral trade partner. The Economist recently highlighted the economic rise of China in relation to the US. The Economist forecasted that in GDP at purchasing parity China could be \$10 trillion a year in front of the U.S.¹²

Accurate figures of Chinese defense spending are notoriously hard to confirm and over the last twelve months China has signaled both increases and decreases in defense

⁸ Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable Fragility* (London: Penguin Books, 2010). In *The Black Swan*, Taleb gives numerous examples of predictions of future markets turning out to be wrong and often wrong by a large differential.

⁹ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “The Future of American Power,” *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2010), <https://www.foreignaffairs.org/articles/2010-11-01/future-american-power> (accessed on October 15, 2015).

¹⁰ Ben Carter, “Is China’s Economy Really the Largest in the World?” *BBC News* (December 16, 2014), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-30483762> (accessed on January 25, 2016).

¹¹ U.S. Commerce Department reports exports and imports of goods in 2012 totaled \$3.82 trillion. China’s customs administration reported trade in the same period as amounting to \$3.87 trillion.

¹² Jason Simpkins, “We are at War with China...and we are Losing,” *The Outsider Club* (October 30, 2015), <http://www.outsiderclub.com/were-at-war-with-china-and-were-losing/1715> (accessed on November 2, 2015).

expenditure.¹³ Nonetheless, if the U.S. continues to cut defense spending in real terms, then it is highly likely that the defense gap between the two nations is will shrink. Moreover, due to vast amounts of cheap labor and maximizing the use of technology developed by other nations, the gap in capability is smaller than the gap in expenditure would suggest.

There is heated debate over China's ability to continue its current rate of economic growth, but slowing growth does not necessarily mean reduced Chinese ambition or reduced willingness to invest in the military. Counter-intuitively, a slowdown in growth may be even more dangerous than a steadily growing China. Whilst China is growing, it has shown in recent history that it will largely adhere to international norms. However, if the Chinese Communist Party's power is threatened due to a rapid slowdown in their economy, there is a chance that they will use military power to compensate for their loss of economic power.

Other countries that have an abundance of latent power, due to large potential workforces and access to natural resources, are also increasing in global significance. Brazil's economy is struggling but India's continues to grow. At over 7% per annum, India has the highest global growth of any nation state, which combined with its vast population and a military of 2.5 million, will make India increasingly important on the world stage. Aside from China and India, no other country is likely to get even close to U.S economic or military power in the next two decades, but there will undoubtedly be a dilution of U.S economic power as growth increases in highly populated, increasingly urbanized, developing countries.

¹³ Richard A. Bitzinger, "China's Double Digit Defence Growth: What it Means for a Peaceful Rise?" *Foreign Affairs* (March 19, 2015), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-03-19/chinas-double-digit-defense-growth> (accessed on January 26, 2016).

The Challenge of Power Projection

Organski's definition of power is "the ability of one nation to control the behavior of another for its own ends."¹⁴ Based on Organski's definition, the inability of the U.S. to bring stability to Iraq and Afghanistan, and the ongoing failure to either neutralize the Islamic State or bring about the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, reflects the limits of U.S. power. Taesuh Cha explains the extent to which some commentators believe the U.S.'s global standing has changed over the last decade:

Unlike the immediate post-Cold War era of triumphalism and neoliberal prosperity, the last decade has witnessed the erosion of the 'unipolar moment' after the major setbacks of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and the financial crisis of 2008. In this context, reconsidering the idea of American exceptional identity is not simply a scholastic exercise, but an urgent practical problem concerning the direction of US leadership in the world.¹⁵

The challenges facing the U.S. in the next few decades are likely to be similar to those that have recently proved so hard to solve. There is no indication that the U.S.'s chances of intervening successfully in the Middle East or Africa are likely to improve, and the long wars against terrorism and drugs are likely to drag on. Simon Serfaty looks nostalgically at a time when "the nation state ruled and military force prevailed, leaving the weak at the mercy of the strong."¹⁶ The irregular nature of the current enemy, combined with restraints imposed by modern democratic values and 24 hour media, make it increasingly hard for the U.S. to impose its will on other nations or non-state actors. "The epoch of state

¹⁴ A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5.

¹⁵ Taesuh Cha, "American Exceptionalism at the Crossroads: Three Responses," *Political Studies Review* 13, no. 3 (August 2015): 351- 362.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/14789302.12091/abstract?userIsAuthenticated=false&deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=ican> Political Review (accessed November 20, 2015).

¹⁶ Simon Serfaty, "The Folly of Forgetting the West," *Policy Review*, (August and September 2012): 36.

coercion and national submission” is over, and with it has gone the U.S.’s potency in unilaterally imposing its will.¹⁷

Proliferation of Terrorism and WMD

Cooper explains the degradation of U.S.’s relative power due to the spread of WMD. Whilst WMD has until recently been owned and controlled by a few state actors, it is now available to numerous states and non-state actors, which in turn empowers states and organizations that had, until recently, been unable to threaten U.S. or UK interests in any meaningful way. The proliferation of WMD gives traditionally weak nations, terrorist groups, and even lone actors, the potential to threaten U.S. national interests more so than ever before. Globalization and modern communications have made it increasingly easy to share WMD technology and for rogue states and terrorists to conduct attacks outside of their traditional sphere of influence. Cooper postulates that “both the spread of terrorism and that of weapons of mass destruction point to a world in which Western governments are losing control.”¹⁸

Based on the number and nature of threats to the U.S.’s relative power, the U.S. may be tempted to try to impose its will by force, but to do so will inevitably lead to overstretch. Conversely, the U.S. could maintain its power through maximizing the use of alliances, international organizations, and bilateral relationships. Encouraging other nations to support the U.S. offers it the best, and most cost effective way, of maintaining power. The potential gains in influence through these relationships are likely to far exceed resultant losses in freedom of action. Bilateral relations with countries that share interests and beliefs, still afford the U.S. international legitimacy, with minimum loss of

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-first Century*, viii.

freedom of maneuver. Therefore, in order to maximize its strength and maintain legitimacy, the U.S. should examine its relationship with its closest and most powerful ally. As Nye states,

It is about finding ways to combine resources in successful strategies in the new context of power diffusion and "the rise of the rest."... the coming decades are not likely to see a post-American world, but the United States will need a smart strategy that combines hard-power and soft-power resources...and that emphasizes alliances and networks that are responsive to the new context of a global information age.¹⁹

¹⁹ Joseph S. Nye, "The Future of American Power." *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2010) <https://www.foreignaffairs.org/articles/2010-11-01/future-american-power> (accessed on October 15, 2015).

Chapter 4: U.S. – UK Shared Interests

There are a number of areas, such as history, commonalities of strategic direction, and shared threats to national security, in which the U.S. and UK have closely shared interests. Such is the depth and breadth of those ties, that it is almost impossible to imagine a scenario in which either country would not support the other in a time of crisis.

History

Since WWI the U.S.-UK relationship has been remarkably resilient. In 1940, at one of Roosevelt's fireside chats "the core of the address stressed the commonality of US and British interests."¹ As Mark Stoler depicts in *Allies and Adversaries*, there were tensions between the two allies during WWII, but military arguments were normally settled through mediation and were often no more intractable than inter-service arguments.² The more fundamental arguments about post war control of colonies, are no longer relevant as empires have gone out of fashion. More recently, the coalitions in the Balkans, Iraq, and Afghanistan serve to show how the U.S. and UK have remained united across a range of conflicts and over a considerable period of time.

Those who seek to challenge the strength of the relationship often refer to the Suez Crisis. The lack of U.S. support for UK action in Suez was the primary reason for Prime Minister Eden's decision to end his Suez adventure prematurely. Whilst the Suez is often used to show how quickly national interests can diverge, a closer examination shows that U.S. - UK links remained strong throughout the crisis. Eisenhower went to

¹ Mark Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the coming of the war: The Search for United States Policy 1937 – 42," *The Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 3 (July 1981): 413 – 440.

² Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

great lengths not to embarrass his British counterparts.³ He even ordered the U.S Navy to be ready to support the British should the situation deteriorate quickly. As soon as the crisis was over Eisenhower extended the olive branch. In a cable that Eisenhower drafted to Eden, the final paragraph read:

In the meantime, no matter what our differences in the approach to this problem, please remember that my personal regard and friendship for you . . . and so many others is unaffected. On top of this, I assure you I shall do all in my power to restore to their full strength our accustomed practices of cooperation just as quickly as it can be done.⁴

Rather than being an argument against U.S.-UK coalitions, the Suez Crisis serves to show that the U.S. and UK have such a plethora of shared interests that even differences in foreign policy can be overcome. There is even evidence that the UK would not have used force in Suez if Eden had realized the extent to which the U.S. opposed the invasion.⁵

Strategic Direction

An examination of national level documents produced by the U.S. and UK demonstrates that the two countries have almost identical national interests. The stated priorities of the UK's 2015 National Security Strategy are to: tackle terrorism; deter state-based threats; strengthen rules-based international order; promote stability, good governance and human rights; and promote the UK's prosperity.⁶ The U.S.'s four

³ Cole C. Kingseed, *Eisenhower and the Suez Crisis of 1956* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1995), 115. Eisenhower decided that the U.S. should not propose a plan to use UN forces to intervene in Suez as he did not want to embarrass the UK.

⁴ Ibid., 121.

⁵ Nigel John Ashton, *Eisenhower, Macmillan and the Problem of Nasser: Anglo-American Relations and Arab Nationalism, 1955-1959* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1996), 91. Analysis indicates that Macmillan, the British Foreign Secretary at the time, misread U.S. signals with regards to Nasser. He interpreted conversations with Eisenhower and Dulles, the U.S. Secretary of State, as giving tacit support for military action. Had Macmillan and Eden listened more carefully to what the U.S. was saying there is a good chance the UK would have decided not to invade Egypt but would have rather looked to build a plan that had U.S. support.

⁶ HM Government, *A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, 9- 10.

enduring interests as stated in the National Security Strategy in 2015 are: the security of the U.S.; a strong, innovative and growing economy; respect for universal values; and a rules based international order advanced by U.S. leadership.⁷

There is almost no divergence between the two sets of national interests. Most importantly both countries recognize the importance of the international order and the desire to promote traditional Western values. The two countries' strategic structures are also similar; the terms National Security Strategy and National Security Council (NSC), were derived by the UK directly from U.S. nomenclature and the UK's NSC structure was modeled on the U.S. system. When it comes to their strategic structures, documents, and explicit national interests, the two countries share very similar views.

A Shared Understanding of Threats

Underpinning the interests of the two nations is mutual agreement of the threats to the West. In the British SDSR in 2010 it even states that “we share its [the U.S.’s] analysis of the security environment” as detailed in the 2010 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review. In fact, so close is the intelligence sharing relationship between the U.S. and UK, it is often hard to spot the differences between the two countries' analyses. Professor Michael Cox, the Co-Chair of the London School of Economics' forum for debating strategic British issues, highlights some of the challenges facing Britain as: “China's rise, a permanent terrorist challenge, profound economic uncertainty, the very real possibility of nuclear break out, a deeply unsettled Middle East.”⁸ Those words could easily have been written by an American analyst about American concerns. Furthermore, threats to both nations would increase should the U.S. suffer a relative

⁷ US Government. *National Security Strategy*. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, February 2015.

⁸ Kitchen, *The Future of UK Foreign Policy*, 15.

decline in power.

Geography

Geographically, the two nations also have complementary interests. The U.S. and UK's livelihood still depends on the oceans. Both nations require freedom of the seas in order to prosper. Additionally, the UK is still responsible for a number of territories and dependencies. Some dependencies such as Diego Garcia, offer the U.S. basing; others, such as Gibraltar, are located in strategically important locations for both nations.

The U.S.'s intent to focus on the Pacific has been touted as a possible divergence in interests, but "events affecting vital and important American interests in the Middle East, West Africa, and Eastern Europe provide critical reminders that one cannot always choose the terrain upon which to counter threats."⁹ Moreover, a U.S. focus on its Pacific flank would not necessarily threaten its relationship with the UK. If anything, it may encourage the U.S. to work more closely with the UK; if any U.S. forces move to the Pacific theatre some will have to be taken from CENTCOM or EUCOM – both areas in which the UK may be able to help counter a reduction in U.S. military footprint.

International Organizations (IOs)

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty states that an attack against one member state is considered an attack against all. The NATO treaty would not be enough in itself to force the U.S. to go to war against its will, but international agreements form another layer of reasoning as to why the U.S. and UK are so likely to support each other in the face of aggression.

⁹ John R. Deni, "NATO's New Trajectories After the Wales Summit," *Parameters* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 2014): 57 – 66.

A study of IOs indicates that the more IOs in which two countries are members, the less likely they are to be in conflict with each other.¹⁰ If that thesis is extrapolated, the U.S. and UK sit within so many of the same international organizations, and hence have so many channels for communication, that the chances of them continuing to share interests and maintain open channels of communication is extremely high. The sheer number of organizations in which the U.S. and UK now liaise with each other ensures that misunderstandings, such as those experienced during the Suez crisis, are increasingly unlikely.¹¹

Economics

Possibly the most compelling link between the fortunes of the U.S. and UK are the two nations' interlinked economies. Instability in either nation negatively effects the other country's growth, jobs, pensions, and tax revenues. The fortunes of the average American are more connected to the fortunes of the London financial markets than ever before and vice versa. A glance at the patterns of the two markets shows the strong economic link between the two countries.

¹⁰ Han Dorussen and Hugh Ward, "Intergovernmental Organizations and the Kantian Peace A Network Perspective," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 2 (2008): 189; Charles Boehmer, Erik Gartzke, and Timothy Nordstrom, "Do Intergovernmental Organizations Promote Peace?" *World Politics* 57, no.1 (2004): 1-38.

¹¹ Both countries are in: the UN Security Council, NATO, Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, G20, G8, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, IMF, World Bank, and WTO. The UK also observes the Organization of American States.



Figure 3. A Comparison of U.S. and UK Financial Markets¹²

Britain invests more in the U.S. than any other country. In 2012 the American British Trade and Investment annual guidebook reported that:

The United Kingdom is the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the United States. In 2010, the total stock of British direct investment in the United States was valued at \$432.5 billion accounting for nearly one-fifth of all FDI in America. Similarly, the total stock of direct investment by US companies into the UK economy is valued at more than \$508 billion. British investments account for nearly 1 million US jobs in highly skilled and well-compensated positions with nearly \$72 billion in annual wages.¹³

Politics and economics within Western democracies are inseparable; a threat to the economy is a threat to the electorate and national resources, and hence a threat to the governing party's ability to retain power. Additionally, an economic downturn in either

¹² Thumbcharts, FTSE v the S&P 500. <http://www.thumbcharts.com/101042/FTSE-vs-S-P-500> (accessed January 30, 2015).

¹³ Tazeem Pasha, "Direct Investment Between the United States and the United Kingdom," *Open to Export* (November 29, 2012). <http://opentoexport.com/article/direct-investment-between-the-united-states-and-the-united-kingdom/> (accessed November 29, 2015).

country will be a grave concern to U.S.-UK conglomerates, whom Michael Useem argues convincingly, have direct influence on the government through their senior leadership.¹⁴ So, even in the unlikely event that one of the two nations' governments would rather not support the other against a serious threat, they would be under direct and heavy pressure from the electorate and senior businessmen to come to the defense of the threatened state.

The Special Relationship

Underpinning all of the aforementioned points is the special relationship. The special relationship is “often used to characterize the strength of the ties between London and Washington made manifest by the strong British commitment to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; by our joint struggle against international terrorism; and by the bonds of language and history.”¹⁵ Like any relationship it ebbs and flows, and yet over the past 70 years it has proved to be more resilient than most would have predicted. That it is an asymmetric relationship is without refute but as long as it is recognized as such, the imbalance should not be an impediment to deepening defense integration. When the aforementioned points are taken in their entirety, it is inconceivable that there could be a serious threat to either nation without the other nation responding.

¹⁴ Michael Useem, *The Inner Circle: Large Corporations and the Rise of Business Political Activity in the US and UK* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁵ David Woolner, “The Special Relationship Between the US and UK began with FDR,” *The Roosevelt Institute*, (July 22, 2010), <http://www.rooseveltinstitute.org/new-roosevelt/special-relationship-between-great-britain-and-united-states-began-fdr> (accessed September 1, 2015).

Chapter 5: Defense Cooperation

Henry Bartlett describes “force planning. . . as the process of appraising the security needs of a nation, establishing the military requirements that result from them, and selecting, within resource constraints, military forces to meet those requirements.”¹ Increasing threats and the U.S. and UK’s budget constraints mean that there is a gap in both countries between the military requirement and the military forces to meet them. Bartlett states that “wants almost always exceed resources” but due to the confluence of the aforementioned dynamics, that gap is as big as it has been since the start of WWII.² Neither nation wishes to reduce their ambitions, nor will they increase the means.

Bartlett goes on to say that the “logical place to begin correcting a mismatch between the security environment and the means is to reconsider the national goals” followed by changing the means, and then addressing the strategy.³ This thesis shows that the two nations do not wish to reduce their goals, nor increase the means. Therefore, using Bartlett’s model, the only way the U.S. and UK can address their strategic imbalance is by addressing the ways. Military integration is one feasible way of doing so and there are a host of theories as to why the U.S. and UK should be able to integrate successfully.

Kenneth Waltz’s *Theory of International Politics* postulates that states have a natural tendency to form alliances in order to balance power.⁴ The theory was useful in explaining some aspects of state relations, such as Soviet actions during the Cold War. However, it falls short in explaining many other alliances. Therefore, Stephen Walt, as

¹ Henry C Bartlett, G. Paul Holman Jr and Timothy E. Somes. "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning." *Strategy and Force Planning* Vol. 2, no. 1 (2004): 17-33.

² Ibid., 29.

³ Ibid., 30.

⁴ Kenneth Waltz, *The Theory of International Politics* (United States: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

one of the leading modern scholars on the subject, refined Waltz's theory one step further and created the balance of threat theory. In his theory Walt explains that states will either 'bandwagon' onto the principal external threat or form alliances in order to 'balance' against the threat.⁵ Against the combined threats of an unpredictable Russia, a rising China, and terrorism, the UK's relationship with the U.S. may be described as balancing, although such a move would certainly be perceived by Russia as bandwagoning. None-the-less, from either perspective, the natural tendencies that Walt highlights give credence as to why the U.S. and UK would naturally want to deepen their alliances.

A deepening of the U.S and UK alliance would fit Micheal Altfeld's Utility Theory in which alliances form when it is useful to both partners. Furthermore, Hans Morgenthau's ideological solidarity theory, in which he argues that the more similar states are, the more likely they are to form alliances, explains exactly why a U.S. – UK relationship is likely to endure. Edmund Burke, reinforces the point when he explains that alliances spring from "correspondence in laws, customs, and habits of life."⁶ So a number of the leading theories regarding alliances support the logic behind closer U.S. and UK ties.

Moreover, Cooper theorizes that Western states have matured. "A large number of powerful states no longer want to fight or conquer...acquiring territory is no longer of interest. Acquiring populations would for most states be a nightmare."⁷ The lack of ambition in Western states to expand territory for self-aggrandizement offers a real opportunity for close military alliances. Cooper goes on to say:

If the second half of Palmerston's proposition, that interests are eternal, no longer applies in the postmodern world, the first half, that no country has

⁵ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1987).

⁶ Ibid., 33.

⁷ Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-first Century*, 33.

permanent friends, is equally alien...institutions like the EU and NATO constitute something analogous to a bond of marriage. In a world where nothing is absolute, permanent or irreversible, the relationships among the postmodern states are at least more lasting than any state's interests. Perhaps they will even turn out to be genuinely permanent.⁸

The Imperative for U.S. and UK Defense Cooperation

Mark Webber states, "in a seemingly indefinite period of defense austerity it is worth considering just how far a pooling of capabilities can extend."⁹ NATO is also calling for "multinational and innovative approaches."¹⁰ In 2014, Ms Hennis, the Minister of Defense of the Netherlands said that "it is imperative that all NATO member states embark on a higher degree of defense co-operation, as each and every ally is a link in the chain of total alliance security."¹¹

It is not just European leaders calling for increased defense cooperation. U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates, stated that NATO faced a "dim and dismal future" if the transatlantic resourcing gap was not narrowed.¹² Gates's successor, Secretary of Defense Hagel, continued to argue that NATO defense budgets could be spent more strategically, meaning that NATO members should coordinate their defense cuts in order to ensure that essential capabilities were maintained.¹³ Hagel went on to say that, "no country today has the power to impose its will and values on other nations. As the new world order

⁸ Ibid., 39-40.

⁹ Mark Webber, Ellen Hallams, and Martin A. Smith, "Repairing NATO's Motors," *International Affairs* 90, no. 4 (2014): 788.

¹⁰ NATO, "An Introduction to the Transatlantic Alliance," *NATO in Focus*, (Brussels: NATO, 2013): 40.

¹¹ NATO Parliamentary Assembly. *Summary of the Meeting of the Defence and Security Committee* (Brussels: NATO, 2014).

¹² Thom Shanker, "Defense Secretary Warns NATO of 'Dim' Future." *New York Times* (June 10, 2011). http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/11/world/europe/11gates.html?_r=0 (accessed on November 4, 2015).

¹³ Webber, Hallams, and Smith, *Repairing NATO's Motors*, 781.

takes shape, America must lead by building coalitions of common interests, as we did after World War II.”¹⁴

So the case for further cooperation is compelling and whilst the UK will undoubtedly continue to work alongside other European nations, on balance it does not make sense to link the UK’s national security too closely to any of them. “European military capabilities are limited, declining, and unlikely to rebound.”¹⁵ Furthermore, in recent years, European nations have not had the same inclination to deploy on foreign adventures. Alan Macmillan postulates that the UK’s strategic culture is such that it has more positive feelings about foreign campaigns than other European countries. Hence the UK’s view of power projection differs markedly.¹⁶ The deepening of defense relationships between the UK and the European Union is also unlikely whilst the UK is negotiating to reduce its ties to Europe. The lack of capable and willing European partners makes the case for the UK to integrate further with the U.S. even more compelling.

Improved interoperability between the U.S. and UK is already underway. The U.S. recently established a Deputy Commander in the UK’s Armored Division and the UK provides a Deputy Commander to the 82nd Airborne Division. In April 2015, one thousand British soldiers spent six weeks training with U.S. forces in Fort Bragg. There are 9,000 U.S. service personnel based in the UK, and 800 UK service personnel in the

¹⁴ Chuck Hagel, “Why Going It Alone No Longer Works,” *Washington Post*, (September 3, 2009). <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/02/AR2009090202856.html?referrer=emailarticle> (accessed on October 1, 2015).

¹⁵ Raphael S. Cohen and Gabriel M. Scheinmann, "Can Europe Fill the Void in US Military Leadership?" *Orbis* 58, no.1 (2015): 39.

¹⁶ Alan Macmillan, “Strategic Culture and National Ways in Warfare: The British Case,” *RUSI Journal* (October 1995): 37.

U.S., of which 200 are on exchange programs with all four U.S. services. Additionally, a British Air Vice Marshall has just been appointed as a Deputy Director at the Defense Intelligence Agency, which shows how far interoperability can go in even the most sensitive areas of defense. The push for increased interoperability is happening and must continue apace but the discussion about the UK shaping its armed forces in recognition of its reliance on the U.S. has remained taboo; until now the British military was big enough that it did not seem so urgent to examine novel ways of maintaining the British military capability.

Smart Defense as a Model

Smart Defense was developed to identify capability areas where NATO allies could work together more closely to mitigate the decline in defense spending. It aimed to address concerns raised by the outgoing U.S. Secretary of Defense Gates, "as the price of military equipment rises and defense budgets decline, the Allies will have to identify what they can do jointly at a lower cost and more efficiently."¹⁷

Smart Defense aims to develop, acquire, and operate capabilities collectively in order to be more efficient and coherent. It runs alongside a number of NATO initiatives such as the Connected Forces Initiative, which builds interoperability of NATO forces through education, training, and exercises. As John Deni recognizes, there are issues with trying to implement initiatives across the whole of NATO. Debates within NATO about how far it should encroach in the business of national governments continue, as does the process of trying to understand the nature and urgency of threats from Russia and terrorist networks. Those concerns are underpinned by "personnel cuts and zero-

¹⁷ David S. Yost, "NATO's Deterrence and Defense Posture After the Chicago Summit" (master's thesis, U.S. Navy Postgraduate School, 2012).

growth budgets in Brussels and Mons as well as mixed approaches to defense spending and investment among NATO allies.”¹⁸ The breadth of interests in NATO, the range of strategic cultures, and the variations in defense spending, make implementation of models such as Smart Defense extremely difficult. Whilst Webber agrees with Deni that progress in those areas has been halting, he also highlights the benefits of initiatives such as Smart Defense in bringing NATO countries closer together and giving NATO increased cohesiveness.¹⁹ So there is consensus that the principle of Smart Defense is sensible but just too ambitious for the number and variety of nations in NATO. However, there are far fewer barriers to a similar model being used by the U.S. and UK.

¹⁸ John R. Deni, “NATO’s New Trajectories After the Wales Summit,” *Parameters* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 2014): 57 – 66.

¹⁹ Webber, Hallams, and Smith, *Repairing NATO's Motors*, 787.

Chapter 6: U.S. - UK Defense Cooperation Options

Due to the one-sidedness of the defense relationship, the majority of any changes to improve defense integration would need to be made by the UK. The U.S. already has such a comparative advantage to any other nation in air power and combined arms armored warfare that the UK military cannot add enough jets, armor, armored infantry or artillery to make a significant difference to a U.S. conventional combined arms battle. However, if the UK focuses its resources correctly, it may be able to maximize the benefits of integrating with the U.S., whilst maintaining its ability to defend its protectorates. For example, a UK focus on high readiness amphibious and airborne troops would benefit the U.S., and would still leave the UK with the ability to defend the Falkland Islands. Moreover, whilst the U.S. maintains an advantage in aircraft carriers, it still often finds itself having to take risk in areas where it would rather have carrier presence. So the UK may also be able to offer much needed support to the U.S. carrier fleet in return for the U.S. providing the logistic support and protection to the UK carriers.

This thesis will not explore all of the benefits that could be gained by closer U.S. and UK cooperation. However, it is likely that benefits could be gained through burden sharing on everything from procurement, research and development, equipment testing, concept development, and training. One example to illustrate the point is safety testing. The UK does not accept U.S. safety data for equipment such as body armor, helmets, and parachutes. Therefore, the UK spends time and money re-testing equipment that has already been tested and approved by the U.S. Department of Defense. The more areas such as that which can be addressed, the more effective both militaries will be.

The options below are designed to initiate the debate.¹ Without detailed, classified, and protracted work between U.S. and UK planning groups, it is not possible to design the force structures that would most complement both nations. Therefore, the suggestions below are not intended to be a comprehensive plan but rather recommendations as to where the two countries may be able to form greater mutual security, whilst not taking further risk against their own national interests.

Naval Options

Since the UK announced its plans to procure two QEC carriers in 2007, spiraling costs and reductions in the UK's defense spending have forced a reduction in the ambition of the program. The carriers will not permanently carry their full complement of aircraft and one of the carriers will spend more time in port than originally planned. Furthermore, the requirement to provide a Carrier Group to support and protect the QEC carriers will put great pressure on an already heavily committed Royal Navy.

However, there is an alternative that would take the pressure off the Royal Navy to permanently sustain a Carrier Group but still leave the UK with the ability to project a carrier for specific tasks. The UK could integrate its carriers into U.S. naval formations. It is already clear that the carriers must be interoperable with the U.S., so the option of attributing the carriers to a U.S. task force would be achievable. If that option is taken, the UK could invest further naval capacity that could be used in areas where the UK has traditionally had a comparative advantage over the U.S., such as minesweeping. The

¹ This thesis assumes that both nations wish the UK to maintain its nuclear capability based on the 1958 Mutual Defense Agreement. Discussion over the opportunity cost of the UK's nuclear program should be the subject of a separate paper. Nor will the thesis explore further intelligence sharing, suffice to say that the level of cooperation between special forces, NSA and GCHQ (the UK's NSA equivalent) shows how the U.S. and UK can work together in even the most sensitive areas.

option would also allow the Royal Navy the freedom of not having to permanently support a carrier. Therefore, in the instance that the UK had to work unilaterally, it could take the carrier from the U.S. carrier group and surge UK supporting assets for the duration of the task. As the Royal Navy became unable to sustain the surge, the carrier could return to the U.S. task force and the Royal Navy could start to recover and repair the supporting fleet.

Land Options

The British Army maintains one Armored Division. However, the Division contains only one operational armored brigade and the operational brigade only contains one heavy tank regiment.² In comparison, even after reductions recently announced by General Odierno, the U.S. Army will have 12 armored Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs), 14 Infantry BCTs, and 7 Stryker BCTs. So the advantage to the U.S. of the UK maintaining an armored brigade is minimal, especially when related to the cost and logistics of sustaining an armored brigade at readiness. As an alternative, the UK could field brigades of specialist infantry that could add a comparative advantage to U.S. forces. Investing in UK airborne, air assault, and amphibious forces would add capability and capacity to the U.S. military as well as supporting the UK's aspirations to project global power. These forces would also allow rapid deployment and hence offer the U.S. a coalition force that is trained and equipped to deliver effect within days of being tasked.

U.S. Generals, such as Lt Gen H.R. McMaster, are concerned about the loss of mass and war fighting troops in the U.S. Army.³ The British Army could help fill that

² There are three Brigades in the Division but the training cycle is such that only one Brigade is at readiness at any one time. Under the 2015 SDSR proposal, the division will have one armored brigade and one medium weight brigade available for operations.

³ Lt Gen HR McMaster, "The Army Operating Concept and Clear Thinking about Future War," *Military Review* (Mar – Apr 2015): 6-20.

gap. Moreover, with the recognition that the US Army cannot do everything, the British infantry could focus on areas in which the US Army views itself as vulnerable.⁴ The U.S. and UK could agree on areas in which the UK could specialize its infantry units in ways that both maintained the UK's ability to defend its protectorates and complement U.S. capability.

Air Options

One of the greatest areas of U.S. comparative advantage over its potential adversaries is in its high end air capability. The U.S. has the full suite of fighters, bombers, and associated infrastructure that are required to work in unison in order to defeat sophisticated air defense systems. Conversely, as the 2011 campaign in Libya demonstrated, the UK does not have enough jets to unilaterally sustain an air war.

The U.S.'s comparative advantage is such that uplifts in RAF F35s over and above those required for the carriers will be extremely expensive and only marginally increase the collective security of the U.S. and UK. Alternatively, the RAF could accept an extremely small but modern fighter capability consisting of the minimum number of aircraft required to fly from the QEC carriers.⁵ The cost versus benefit of buying more extremely expensive jets than the absolute minimum, does not add up when viewed through the lens of such U.S. air dominance. If the RAF made savings on excess jets, they would be able to spend more of their resources on lower technology aircraft that can help sustain and protect a deployed force with strategic and tactical air transport, support helicopters, and low tech close air support.

⁴ Steven Metz, "The Danger of America Asking its Army to Do Too Much," *World Politics Review* (August 2015). <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/16505/the-danger-of-america-asking-its-army-to-do-too-much> (accessed November 20, 2015).

⁵ The 2010 SDSR recommended that the number of F35s required by the UK to fly from the carriers was 48.

A focus on air transport and helicopters would allow the light infantry and airborne forces to deploy globally at short notice, give the UK the ability to conduct airmobile theater entry (albeit within an air corridor secured by U.S. assets), and be well suited to stabilization and humanitarian operations. In doing so it would allow the U.S. increased freedom to invest in fighting the most dangerous threats and to focus on its comparative advantages. Increased UK air transport could also directly support the fleet of U.S. transport planes and continue to be useful to the U.S. even in situations in which the UK has not authorized the use of force.

Further standardization of the U.S. and UK fleets should also be considered. For example, the UK's procurement of C17 from the US makes sense. But rather than seeking to make the whole UK air transport fleet interoperable with the U.S., the UK has also opted to buy A400M aircraft along with its European allies. When dealing with something as serious as national security, things such as procurement must be viewed through a realist lens. The advantages of procuring aircraft that are compatible with the most powerful and technically advanced country on earth, outweigh the benefits of linking with European nations. If done correctly, both nations could potentially gain from economies of scale and joint procurement. In doing so, interoperability would be built into the system.

Defense engagement

There are a number of countries, especially in Africa, that are not of vital interest to the U.S. or UK, but with whom both nations still wish to maintain influence. In some of those countries U.S. and UK military teams work with indigenous forces and, even though both nations wish to achieve similar aims, often there is duplication of effort as both countries seek the time, attention, and support of indigenous military and political

leaders. If the U.S. and UK agree to work more closely together, there is room for efficiencies to be found which would benefit both countries. In a time of austerity, both the U.S. and UK are increasingly using the tactic of training and assisting foreign forces in order to achieve their national objectives, so there is plenty of scope to be more efficient in this area. Neither country is going to relinquish its influence in countries that they view as critical, such as Kenya. However, across North and sub-Saharan Africa there are numerous nations that have temporary or permanent U.S. and UK training teams, such as Gambia, Tunisia, and Algeria, where more intelligent division of labor would allow both nations to use their resources more efficiently. At first glance, the numbers of military personnel committed to those tasks may seem small. However, when the 3:1 ratio⁶ required to put forces into the field is considered, and combined with the logistics required to support remote training locations, the cost of maintaining forces in other nations is significant.

If some of the aforementioned recommendations are considered, it is possible that the UK could make savings against some of its traditional capabilities such as heavy armor, air, and ships. In return the UK may be able to better invest in its specialist infantry, improve its ability to project force by the air, and find a way for the U.S. to benefit from the use of another carrier whilst not precluding its unilateral use by the UK. The U.S. would benefit from more of those types of capabilities and the UK would benefit disproportionately from aligning so closely with the world's pre-eminent military power. Implied in all of the above is far greater interoperability between the forces which

⁶ Three soldiers are committed for every soldier required in a remote location because there must always be one soldier in pre-deployment training, one on the task, and one recovering.

would allow the U.S. and UK to form a coalition and project power without all of the challenges traditionally associated with militaries from two nations working together.

Chapter 7: Issues and Challenges

The two primary risks of alliances are that one country is abandoned in their time of need, or that a country is unwillingly dragged into a conflict by its alliance partners. The assessment in Chapter 4 shows that the chances of either side abandoning each other in a time of genuine need are small, and the U.S. and UK are already closely enough aligned that the threat of being dragged into conflict by the other nation exists already. However, there are other obstacles to the U.S. and UK being able to conduct a process of military integration, three of which are most prevalent: UK resistance to admitting a loss of unilateral capability; a reluctance in the U.S. to admit military vulnerabilities; and the propensity for national interests to change.

UK Pride

The UK has a proud military history. The strategic culture of the UK is tied to being an island nation, one that has not been invaded since 1066, and a nation that led the world for much of the last few centuries. Due to its history, the UK has a great pride in its military and it sees itself as a global force. The British still consider the British ‘Tommy’, immortalized by Rudyard Kipling’s poem of the same name, as superior to soldiers from any other nations. Therefore, the idea that the UK is no longer entirely in control of its own defense would be an unpleasant surprise to many. Concomitantly, a move to link the UK’s defense to another nation will require a realignment of the British public’s view of the UK’s military capability. Due to the UK’s strategic culture, that will not be easy.

Moreover, the backing of the Iraq war by Prime Minister Blair still hangs heavily over British decision-making. Politicians are wary of linking too closely with the U.S. for fear of receiving the kind of ‘U.S. lap dog’ criticism thrown at Prime Minister Blair.

A number of commentators, such as Sir Rodric Braithwaite, argue that the UK has received little from the U.S. in return for supporting them in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹ However, that is simply not true. As the nation that provided the largest and most enduring support to the U.S. in both campaigns, the UK has benefitted from unrivalled intelligence sharing, support from U.S. logistics, use of U.S. training estates, and access to U.S. technology. Moreover, the UK's commitment ensured that the UK remains the U.S.'s most trusted ally- it is only due to the commitment in Iraq and Afghanistan that the UK is able to have the debate about further defense integration. Nonetheless, the hard facts may still struggle to overcome the natural emotional inclination of the UK politicians and public to cling onto the possibility of unilateral action, regardless of the UK's actual ability to do so.

U.S. Unilateralism

If U.S. politicians agree that "America's lead is so great, its accumulation of technology, experience and material so far beyond any other country, that the next ten or twenty years – probably more - are guaranteed,"² it is unlikely that they will support integration with the UK military. But this would be to ignore the advice by Gen McMaster who states that there is a natural U.S. tendency to over-rely on technology at the expense of mass and warfighting troops- both of which the U.S. are losing in ongoing defense cuts.³ The UK still has the forth biggest defense budget and therefore, if the U.S. combines its power with the UK, it would ensure that their combined defense budgets would be unassailable for any combination of adversaries. It may also have the effect of

¹ Kitchen, *The Future of UK Foreign Policy*, 7.

² Ibid.

³ McMaster, *The Army Operating Concept and Clear Thinking about Future War*, 6- 20.

encouraging other 5 Eye partner nations to increase their defense integration with the U.S., which would further increase the U.S.'s comparative advantage.

Additionally, there is no downside to the U.S. of supporting increased military integration with the UK. Any restructuring of UK forces will purposefully complement U.S. forces. The U.S. would not be required to lose any capabilities in order to accommodate UK forces (even though in time it may rebalance to capitalize on the uplift in capability offered by the UK), and hence the U.S. would retain the ability to go it alone.

Diverging National Interests

Even if the U.S. and UK's national interests endure, changes to their weighting could lead to rifts. One area where U.S. and UK views vary is on their relations with China. The UK views China primarily through a commercial lens, whereas the U.S. sees China primarily as a security concern.⁴ The fear of diverging interests is increased by the bi-polar nature of U.S. and UK domestic politics that could lead to the nations being led by parties and individuals of completely different political persuasions.⁵ Walt highlights one further concern particular to the UK due to its role as the smaller partner: "Allying with the strong side...leaves a state vulnerable to the whim of its partners."⁶ However, so tight is the relationship between the U.S. and UK, the UK runs that threat anyway.

⁴ The British Government recognized this in a Foreign Affairs Committee report in 2014: "However, Asia—and particularly China—is an area where differences may open up between the UK and U.S. Government approaches, with the UK Government giving priority to commercial factors, and the U.S. approach driven more heavily by security considerations." HM Government. *Government Foreign Policy towards the United States*, Foreign Affairs Committee, April 2014, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmfaff/695/69504.htm>

⁵ Although it is worth noting that President Bush and Prime Minister Blair hailed from opposite sides of the political spectrum and yet they still agreed on the U.S.'s and UK's shared national interests.

⁶ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, 110-110.

For the UK to mitigate that risk, it should get so close to the U.S. that it maximizes its chances of shaping U.S. opinion to suit its needs.

However, there is a contrary view. Walt, in *The Origins of Alliances*, quotes Secretary of State Dean Rusk, “America’s alliances are at the heart of the maintenance of peace, and if it should be discovered that the pledge of America was worthless, the structure of peace would crumble and we would be well on our way to a terrible catastrophe.”⁷ This is an important point. If the U.S. broke its alliance with the UK, U.S. allies around the world would question their relationship with the U.S. and enemies of the U.S. would inevitably exploit the perceived unreliability of the U.S. The nature of this symbiotic relationship was demonstrated whilst air strikes against the Syrian regime were being debated in August 2013. Both U.S. and UK leaders were committed to air strikes but once the UK parliament voted against air strikes, the U.S. administration changed its strategy. This instance shows the strength of the relationship and how the U.S. looks to the UK as a thermometer of global opinion.

Realists will naturally shy away from such close defense cooperation between states. John Mearsheimer, argues that states exist to maximize their power, the natural extrapolation of which is that states need to look after themselves.⁸ However, with regards to the U.S.-UK relationship even an ardent realist should see the mutual benefits of further defense cooperation.

⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁸ John J Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company. Inc, 2001).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

When the pressures of complex global challenges are overlaid against a strategic context of decreasing defense budgets and an increasing emphasis on coalitions, there is a clear case for the U.S. and UK to examine their defense engagement. Interoperability is essential and happening, but the two nations should also look at sharing the burden of defense more effectively.

Any such move would come with risks and this is not something to rush into; alliances, “as human creations...are imprecise, prone to political interference, and always changing.”¹ But to ignore the possible benefits of enhanced defense integration due to a sentimental attachment to the conduct of unilateral operations in the case of the UK, or clinging to a waning hegemony in the case of the U.S., would be unwise. As Lord Powell explains:

The United States, which most closely shares our outlook, cannot reasonably be expected to bear the burden of global security alone, particularly as its fiscal and economic management woes will increasingly inhibit the exercise of American power. Other European countries by and large lack the political will to handle the big security issues. Unless Britain continues to contribute to common causes above its “quota”, America will become progressively less respectful of our interests. Our ability to ensure the best outcomes for Britain in a world populated by new behemoths will be unacceptably constrained.²

From January to March 1941 U.S. and UK military leaders held a two month planning conference. During the conference the planning group devised the first stages of a U.S. - UK combined strategy to win WWII, even though the U.S. had not even entered the war at that stage. The timing and length of the conference, as well as the seniority of the officers involved, shows the kind of commitment required to find

¹ David Clark MacKenzie, *A World Beyond Borders: An Introduction to the History of International Organizations* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 82.

² Kitchen, *The Future of UK Foreign Policy*, 24.

solutions to complex, emotive problems involving great complexity, expense, and scale. The detailed discussions needed to identify options for defense specialization will also take time and investment. But the time and effort will be worth it. For the UK, integration with the U.S. is a way of remain a major player in global defense; for the U.S., defense integration with the UK would offer a model for maintaining global power through more effective working with allies. To ensure the opportunity to maximize the two nation's use of resources is not missed, a combined working group must take a fresh look at the opportunities for closer U.S. - UK defense cooperation.

If, after an extensive study looking at all feasible options for two countries to manage their collective defense more efficiently, no progress is made, the UK is left with stark choices: The UK Government must either reassess the UK's national interest and accept steadily diminishing security, or plan for an increase in defense expenditure in order to rebalance ends, ways, and means. The consequences for the U.S. may not be as immediate, but they are no less serious. If the U.S. cannot find ways to integrate further with an ally such as the UK, it will find itself short on means to protect its national interests and unable to maximize the support of its allies, during a period of increasing threats.

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Lieutenant Colonel Nick Cowley commissioned from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst into an armored cavalry regiment in 2001. He served as an armored Troop Leader in Germany, Canada, Kosovo and Iraq. After joining a specialist unit he conducted three further tours of Iraq and one in Afghanistan.

After attending Intermediate Command and Staff College (Land) he worked on the Afghanistan desk in the Ministry of Defence before assuming Squadron Command in 2011. As a Squadron Commander he conducted two further tours of Afghanistan but relinquished command after being seriously injured. For his time as a Squadron Commander Lt Col Cowley was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE).

Having recovered from injury Lt Col Cowley was employed as the Chief of Staff of the UK's High Readiness Air Assault Brigade. In 2015, Lt Col Cowley was posted to the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in Norfolk, Virginia.